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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 INR-05 CIAE-00 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8577

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 5076

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IR
SUBJ: DISCUSSION WITH COURT MINISTER ON INTERNAL AFFAIRS
OF IRAN

REF: TEHRAN 4982

1. COURT MINISTER HOVEYDA ASKED ME TO SEE HIM MORNING MAY 26 AT HIS RESIDENCE. HE REFERRED TO MY CONVERSATION WITH SHAH (REFTEL) AND SAID THAT, SUBSEQUENT TO THAT TALK, SHAH HAD ASKED HIM TO TAKE CHARGE OF ARRANGING RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND MODERATE ISLAMIC CLERGY.

2. HOVEYDA SAID HE ACCEPTED THE ASSIGNEMENT RELUCTANTLY, SINCE HE KNOW FROM HIS DAYS AS PRIME MINISTER, THAT IT WOULD BE AWKWARD FOR AMOUZEGAR TO HAVE HOVEYDA ACTING IN A MATTER WHICH SHOULD PROPERLY BE A TASK FOR THE GOVERNMENT. HE HAD NEVERTHELESS BEGUN HIS EFFORT AND WAS PULLING TOGETHER THOSE POLITICAL PERSONALITIES WHO SHOULD BE ENGAGED IN THE EFFORT. (HUSHANG ANSARY WAS LEAVING THE RESIDENCE AS I ARRIVED.)

3. HOVEYDA SAID THAT THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE SOME GIVE AND TAKE IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS. IT WAS NO LONGER POSSIBLE MERELY TO TELL THE MULLAHS THE GOVERNMENT POSITION AND
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EXPECT THEM TO SUPPORT IT. "WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE SOME CHANGES IN OUR POSITION."

4. N SIMILAR VEIN, HOVEYDA WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE GOVERNEMENT NEEDED TO DO A FAR MORE EFFECTIVE JOB IN PRESENTING ITS VARIOSS PROGRAMS TO THE PUBLIC. THERE NEEDED TO BE DEBATE ON PROGRAMS IN ADVANCE OF THEIR FINAL FORMULATION SO

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THAT THE GENERAL PUBLIC WOULD FEEL IT HAS PLAYED SOME ROLE
IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT. NEW POLITICAL SKILLS WILL BE NEEDED
IN ORDER TO MAFE GOVERNEMENT PROGRAMS EFFECTIVE.

5. COMMENT: BY TURNING TO HOVEYDA AS THE PRINCIPAL INSTRUMENT
OF HIS EFFORT TO SEEK CONCILIATION WITH THE MULLAHS, THE
SHAH HAS SELECTED HIS MOST ADROIT AND EXPERIENCED POLITICIAN, WHO
HAS GOOD WORKING RELATIONS WITH THE ISLAMIC CLERGY. HOVEYDA'S
DEMURRER ABOUT ENGAGING IN AMOUZEGAR'S BUSINESS SHOULD BE TAKEN
WITH A GRAIN OF SALT, SINCE IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT HE RELISHES
HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT AND IS UNDERTAKING IT WITH CONSIDERABLE ZEAL.
AS I LEFT, HE SAID HE HOPED TO AVOID A "HOT SUMMER" IN IRAN.
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